WASHINGTON D.C.– Today, Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15) officially announced the launch of a pioneering new project to improve civic engagement with Congress. The Congressman is redesigning his website – using a technique called crowd-sourcing – in the latest initiative by Rep. Honda to make government more transparent and accessible to the public.

Launched this week on CrowdSpring.com (link), designers will mock up multiple layouts and looks for consideration by Rep Honda. California's 15th District constituents will then vote on the designs at   www.honda.house.gov/redesign   . The technical process will be overseen by GovTrends, a web vendor specializing in Congressional websites, with the final design chosen based on constituent votes, design functionality, and usability.

Rep. Honda has always been in the front of web trends, paving the way.   The Congressman's current website has consistently been recognized for its outstanding design, having won 3 Gold and 1 Silver Mouse Awards by the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF). Rep. Honda is the only Member of the House of Representatives to be chosen for a website award from CMF each time it was awarded.

"This crowd-sourcing initiative," said Rep. Honda "ushers in a new era of government transparency. Many government websites have good content, but the content is very hard to find. We are giving power to the people, and democratizing the way we interact with the public, interfacing not only with our constituents, but with the design community in general.

"My goal, as a Member of Congress is to serve my constituency, first and foremost. This crowd-sourcing initiative ensures that I am meeting the needs of our constituents, on their terms, by allowing unprecedented level of access into the design process of a government website."

The purpose of Rep. Honda's website redesign is to move America closer to Government 2.0, where the public's ability to access and provide advice to Members of Congress is enhanced by new technology and new online participation. Rep. Honda is very active through Twitter, Facebook, and his blog. He intends to make his new site be an example for other member sites to follow.

"Congress must take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies," said Rep. Honda, "to transform the relationship between citizens and government. Instead of viewing the public as a customer for services, I believe that we should empower citizens to become our partners in shaping the future of our nation."

This project comes on the heels of Rep. Honda's provision in the Omnibus Bill, passed earlier this year, to provide free access to Congress' legislative databases. Rep. Honda, who placed a measure in the House bill directing Congress, the Library of Congress and the Government Printing Office to make its data available to the public in raw form, is enabling the public to access government data in a more user-friendly format than the government's own.